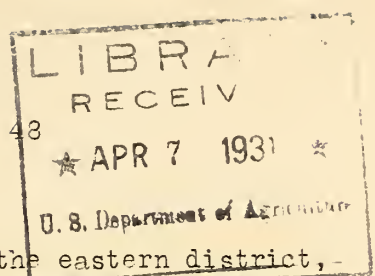


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March 30, 1931



A series of radio talks by W. R. M. Wharton, chief of the eastern district, Food and Drug Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture, delivered Monday mornings, at 10. A.M., Eastern Time, through WJZ, New York, and associated National Broadcasting Company stations.

Good morning, my radio friends, I am your Government representative who tells you each week how foods and drugs are safeguarded through the enforcement of the Federal food and drugs act, and who tells you how to read labels, in order that you may become careful, exacting, discriminating, and economical buyers.

You know, do you not, that a few manufacturers of foods products will take advantage of you, if they can, by giving short weights? Well, the Federal food and drugs act serves to keep short-weight and short-measure practices to a minimum. This law requires that the net weight or net volume of all foods in package form must be declared on the label, and it requires that such statements be true. In the enforcement of the food and drugs act a great many cases have been discovered wherein manufacturers have packed products short weight purposely to cheat the public. While reputable manufacturers generally are careful to give full weight and full measure, there are, I am sorry to say, a few food producers who will take advantage of you. An instance of wholesale short weighting is represented by an experience which we had some years ago when a large baking concern was found to be selling loaves of wrapped bread labeled as containing 1-1/2 pounds, when the actual quantity of bread in the loaves was considerably less than that. This fraud was deliberate and designed to swell the profits of the corporation. The Company was cited to a hearing on all of the discovered violations of the law. As is generally the case when such law violators are detected, some flimsy excuses were made but there was no denial of the facts. It was not denied that the public had paid for more bread than it had received and this, of course, was the real issue. In due time, the evidence of this company's illegal acts was brought to the attention of a grand jury and that grand jury returned an indictment against the corporation charging 16 violations of the Federal food and drugs act. The indictment alleged misbranding of the loaves of bread with the statement "net weight 1-1/2 pounds" which was false, because the loaves weighed much less. Well, presently the company making this short weight bread, this cheating bread, this illegal bread, appeared before a court and entered a plea; and that plea was - guilty. The court imposed a fine of \$2,200. Since that time, that particular company, apparently having learned that it is unprofitable to violate the Federal food and drugs act, has been putting out full-weight loaves of bread. It is, my friends, by action such as this that the enforcement of the Federal food and drugs act protects your food and drug supply.

My read-the-label subject today is bread. Now, bread labels do not give you as much information as they might, but you can benefit materially by reading them.

You should know what the names of the different kinds of breads mean, and so we will define the terms which are descriptive of the various kinds of bread. There have been many improvements in bread making on a large scale and definitions of bread have changed to some extent from time to time. Very re-

cently, the Food Standards Committee proposed a new revision of bread definitions. This committee, you know, is the official committee appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture to recommend definitions and standards for food products for use as guides in the enforcement of the Federal food and drugs act. The new definitions proposed for bread by the committee have not yet been officially adopted by the Secretary of Agriculture, but these definitions will probably be adopted essentially as proposed and, therefore, I shall tell you what these latest definitions are.

BREAD OR WHITE BREAD: is described as loaves or smaller units, baked from a properly prepared mixture of flour, water, fat or oil, sugar, or other fermentable carbohydrate substance, salt, and yeast; with or without the addition of milk or a milk product, of diastase or proteolytic ferments, and such limited amounts of unobjectionable salts to serve the purpose only as yeast nutrients. The flour, of course, must be wheat flour but up to three per cent of other edible farinaceous substance may be used.

WHOLE WHEAT BREAD, ENTIRE WHEAT BREAD, or GRAHAM BREAD: are all defined as a single product made as loaves or smaller units by baking the ingredients, defined under white bread, after proper preparation, with the exception that the flour ingredient must be whole wheat flour, and no substitution of other edible farinaceous substances may be made.

MILK BREAD is bread baked of the same ingredients as those outlined under white bread, except that whole milk or its equivalent of milk products must be used instead of water.

RAISIN BREAD is bread made of the same ingredients as white bread with the addition of raisins. The finished product must contain not less than three ounces of raisins per pound of bread.

RYE BREAD is bread made from the same ingredients as white bread except that the flour ingredient must consist of at least one-third rye flour.

BOSTON BROWN BREAD is bread, commonly in the form of cylindrical loaves, obtained by steaming or baking a leavened mixture of rye flour or meal, corn meal, and wheat flour, with molasses, salt, milk, or a milk product, with or without water and with or without raisins. Leavening is commonly effected through the use of baking powder or of sodium bicarbonate and sour milk.

White bread, whole wheat, entire wheat, graham bread, milk bread and rye bread may not contain, one hour or more after baking, in excess of 38 per cent moisture. No moisture standard is set for raisin bread and Boston brown bread.

Now, my friends, you will know what these bread terms mean when you encounter them.

A large percentage of the commercial bread sold is wrapped and the most important statement for the label readers on these wrappers is the statement of net weight. You should read net weight statements on bread labels instead of asking for a small loaf or a large loaf--and let me tell you why. We recently made a survey of bread labels and bread prices. We investigated the large and small loaves of 12 manufacturers. Of the large loaves, 10 were labeled with a state-

ment of weight and two were not. Of the 10 that were labeled, seven declared 20 ounces, one declared 19 ounces, and two declared 18 ounces. Of the 12 small loaves, 10 bore net weight declaration and two did not. Of the 10 that were labeled, six declared 14 ounces and four declared 13 ounces. Now the point is that a loaf of equal quality bread weighing 20 ounces is worth 10% more than one weighing 18 ounces. A loaf weighing 14 ounces is worth 7-1/2% more than one weighing 13 ounces. These are facts that the label readers should know. Let us now see what the prevailing prices for these loaves were. The loaves labeled as containing 20 ounces ranged in price from seven to 12 cents per loaf. The loaves weighing 18 ounces sold respectively for eight and 10 cents. The loaves weighing 14 ounces sold from six to 10 cents per loaf, and those labeled as containing 13 ounces sold from five to eight cents. We have a 20 ounce loaf selling for seven cents and a 13 ounce loaf selling for eight cents. From a price and weight standpoint alone, the 20 ounce loaf at seven cents is the best buy, and let me say that it was a good quality bread--in my opinion, equally as good as the 14 ounce loaf that sold for 12 cents. Don't you see, my friends, that you can economize by learning to read labels intelligently?

Many statements which are just trade puffs are found on bread labels. Expressions such as "Good always," "100% pure," "High grade," "Quality guaranteed," and the like do not mean very much as differentiating one bread from another, so do not pay any attention to these.

My friends, I have been trying for nearly a year to teach you how to read labels. I want you to select and choose rather than to accept what is offered. You know that tradesmen know the tricks of making you buy. You know that human weaknesses are cataloged and studied by classes in salesmanship and ways and means are sometimes devised for taking advantage of ignorance, indifference, credulity, for breaking down sales resistance? You know, do you not, that you are at the mercy of the tradespeople unless you know qualities and relative values? What we need in this country is less high-powered selling and more intelligent buying. I would educate consumers to become intelligent buyers. I would fight indifference and over-innocent credulity. I would cause consumers to build up a defense against being imposed upon. I would preserve for every individual that inherent human trait, caution, the protective instinct, which the business man calls sales resistance. I would go back to the fundamentals of old fashioned intelligent buying where knowledge was the guide and quality and value the determining factors.

I am not advocating less buying but I am advocating more intelligent buying; and this means you will have more money with which to do more buying. If I had my way, I would organize the housewives of every community in this country into leagues of intelligent buyers, meeting regularly for exchange of buying information. I can visualize a meeting of such a club of women. The president is receiving a report from the chairman of a committee appointed to make an economic survey of bread, in all stores in the community, involving price, quality, weight, relative value and labeling. The chairman reports store after store asking 10 to 12 cents for various sized loaves--finally one store is reported as selling a 20 ounce loaf of bread for seven cents. The committee chairman says she examined the bread and found that the seven cent loaf compared favorably in quality with other loaves containing less quantity and selling for higher prices. The chairman makes the recommendation that the members of the intelligent label readers' club agree to buy bread during the following week

from the particular store handling that particular brand at seven cents per loaf ---and it is so ordered. What would be the effect of applying the same system to all your food purchases? You can do much the same thing individually by knowing how to read labels. I can see tradesmen taking notice of such action. I can see better qualities and more equitable prices as a result.

Now to become an intelligent buyer means that you will need to know product definitions and standards, that you will need to know quality, and values, and that you will need to know how to read labels. It is my job, as your Government representative, to teach you how to read labels---to warn you not to yield your sales resistance---to caution you to protect it from inroads of salesmen who have been taught specifically how to break it down. My radio talks are for the purpose of making you intelligent buyers. You may become intelligent buyers by learning to read labels and you may learn to read labels by studying the mimeographed copies of my talks, which are free for the asking.

Write for them to W. R. M. WHARTON, United States Department of Agriculture, 201 Varick Street, New York City.
